

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

FOR NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

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State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

Much seasonal noise; little underlying economic change

In **Adams County**, October through December unemployment rates remained well below typical levels. (See graph page 3.) July and October saw over 120 more leisure & hospitality jobs in 2003 than in 2002, but December saw fewer in 2003 than in 2002, suggesting that gains may have been seasonal. In contrast, the construction sector has seen roughly 30 to 40 more jobs for each month of 2003 than the same month of 2002, suggesting stable gains apart from seasonal cycles.

The unemployment rate in **Forest County** was closer to its typical level in December than over the summer, but not as close as September or November. Construction and manufacturing both peak in the summer months and both added fewer jobs this spring and summer than last spring and summer, but otherwise followed last year's seasonal trends.

Although still well above typical levels, **Lanlade County's** October through December unemployment rates were closer to typical than they were during other months in 2003.

During spring and summer, manufacturing added enough jobs to reach 2002 levels, but job cuts in the autumn and winter left it below 2002 levels again. Apart from slightly stronger spring-time growth, retail & wholesale trade sector followed 2002 seasonal trends fairly closely throughout 2003.

Lincoln County saw unemployment rates closer to typical levels from October through December than they had been for most of 2003. Construction employment was flatter in the summer of 2003 than in the summer of 2002 and fell a bit faster from this October through November than it had the previous year. Comparing December 2002 to December 2003, no sector added more jobs than leisure & hospitality. During summer months, the sector had 100 to 120 jobs more than 2002, but by December the increase shrank to 30 jobs.

In December, **Marathon County's** unemployment rate matched its typical level. This is more encouraging than summer levels, which were well above typical levels, but not quite as encouraging as January, February and November rates, which were below typical. See graph above. For nine months of 2003, manufacturing estimates were 300 to 600 jobs above

their 2002 levels. October and December estimates were just 100 jobs over their 2002 levels. In 2002, September through December were fairly flat for education & health services, but the same period in 2003 saw more volatility and net growth.

As in May and October, **Oneida County** saw a December unemployment rate closer to its typical level than it had been for most of 2003, but not as close as it had been in November. From January through June, leisure & hospitality saw about 600 to 630 more jobs than the same months of 2002. Respectively, August and December saw 1,040 and 230 more jobs in 2003 than in 2002. Information, professional, business & other ser-

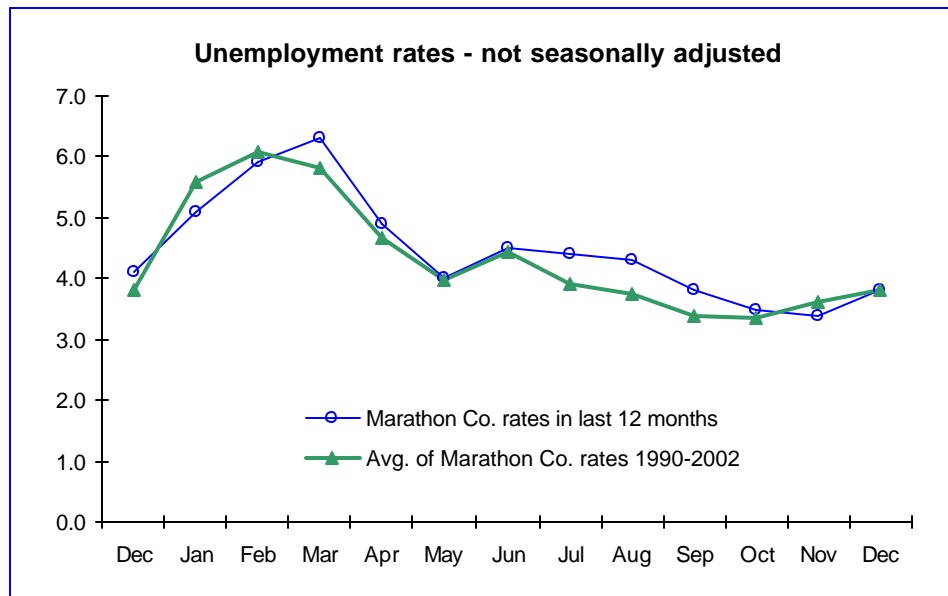
vices added fewer jobs this summer than last and shed fewer jobs this autumn than last.

For the second month in a row, **Portage County** reported an unemployment rate just 0.2 percent above typical, which is closer than it had been from January through September of 2003. Manufacturing added fewer jobs this spring than last, but lost just as

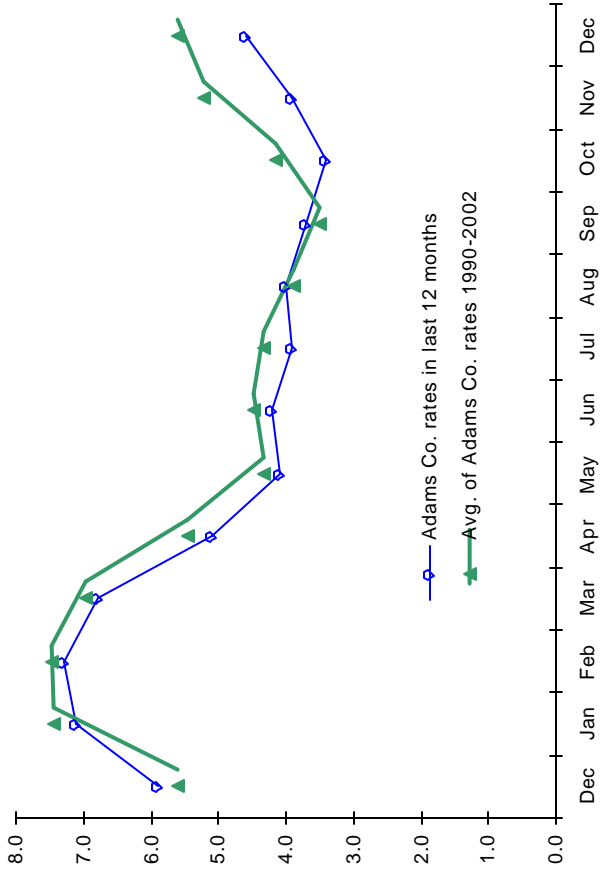
many this autumn as last, so it finished 2003 with fewer jobs than 2002. Retail & wholesale trade spent most of 2003 recovering the jobs it lost in January. Although January 2004 estimates will tell us more, it seems curious for the trade sector to have fewer jobs in December than in November.

The December unemployment rate in **Vilas County** was not as close to typical as November, but was much closer than it had been January through August. Manufacturing was flatter in 2003 than in 2002, adding fewer jobs in the spring and shedding fewer jobs in the fall. From January through May, leisure & hospitality estimates were roughly 175 to 225 jobs above their 2002 levels; from October through December, they were 210 to 230 jobs below their 2002 levels.

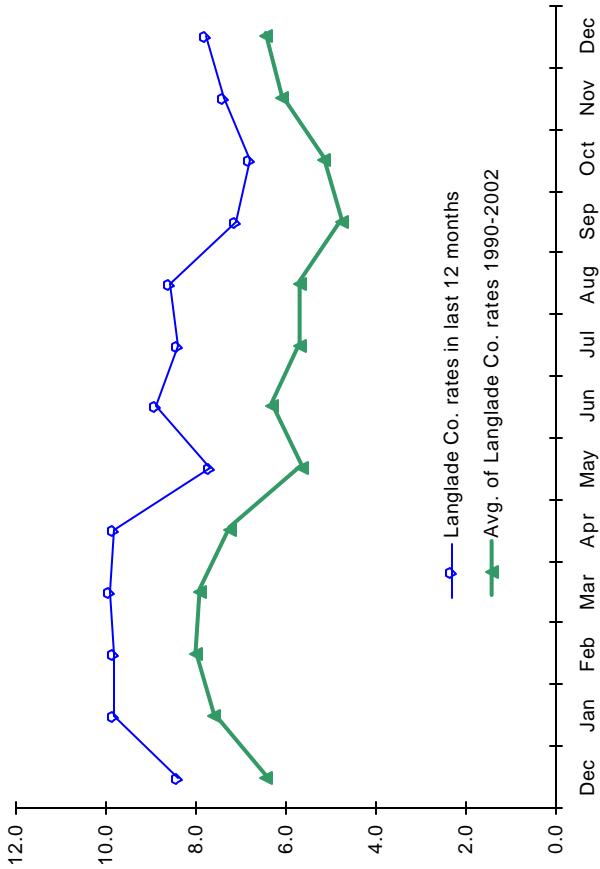
Wood County's November and December unemployment rates were closer to typical levels than most of 2003. Retail & wholesale trade saw more jobs in December than any other month in 2003, and came as close to reaching 2002 levels as it had at any point in 2003. Information, professional, business & other services saw soft summer hiring, leaving the sector only slightly above 2002 levels by autumn.



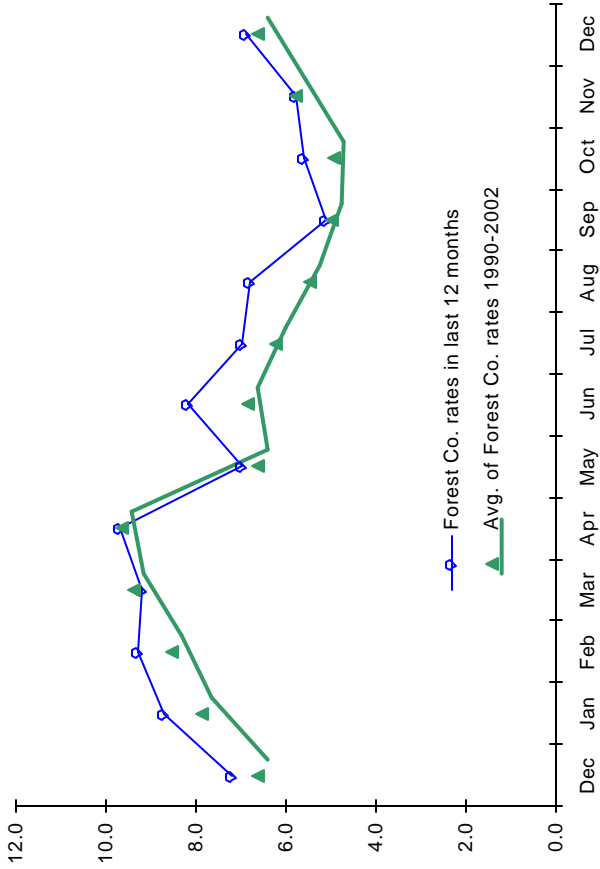
Unemployment rates - not seasonally adjusted



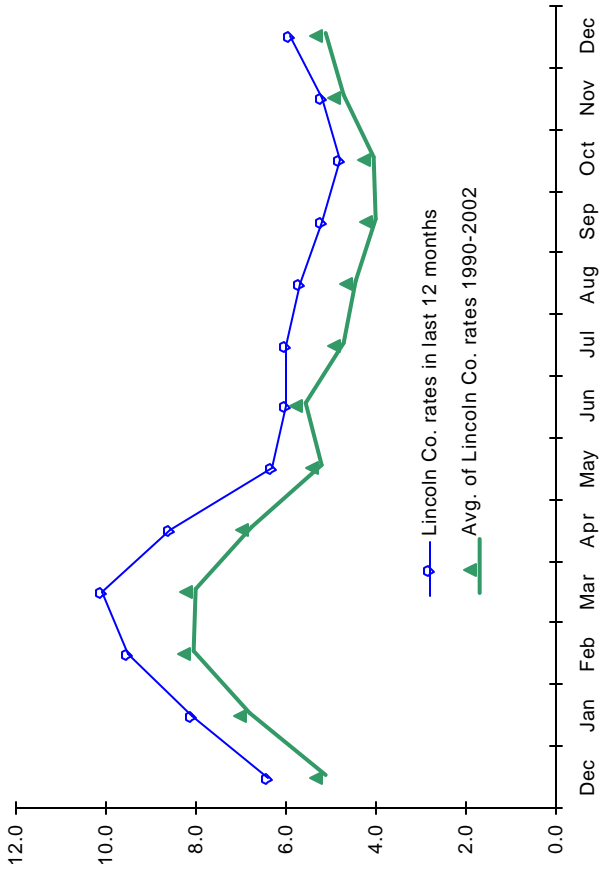
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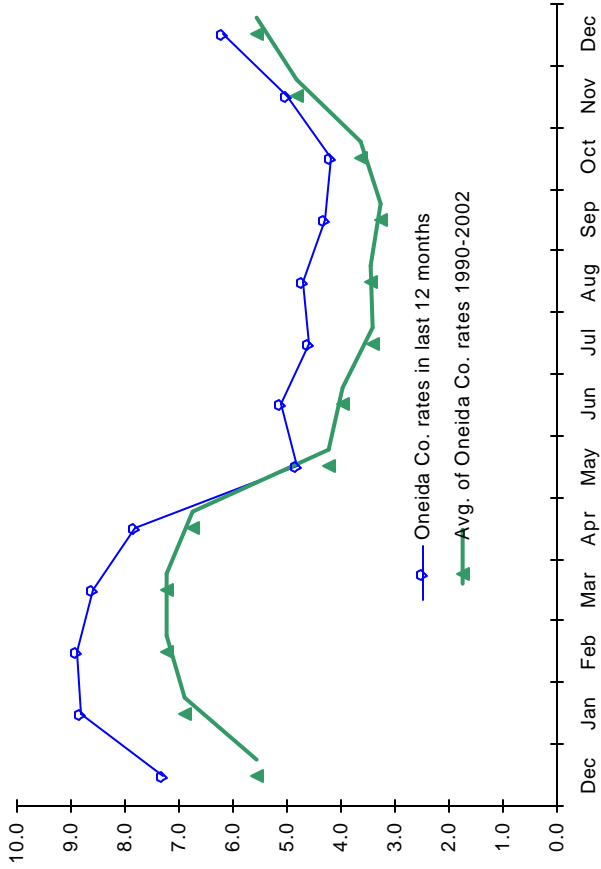
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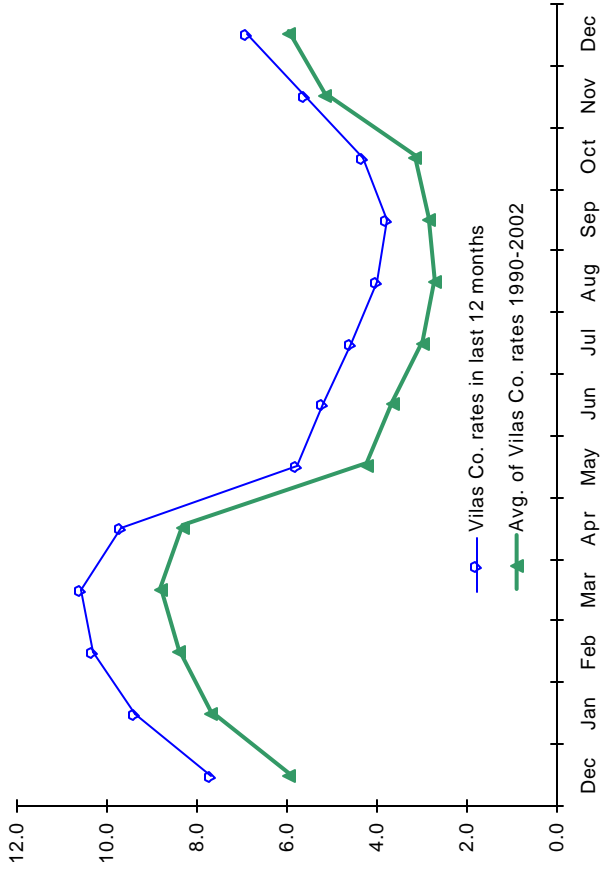
Unemployment rates - not seasonally adjusted



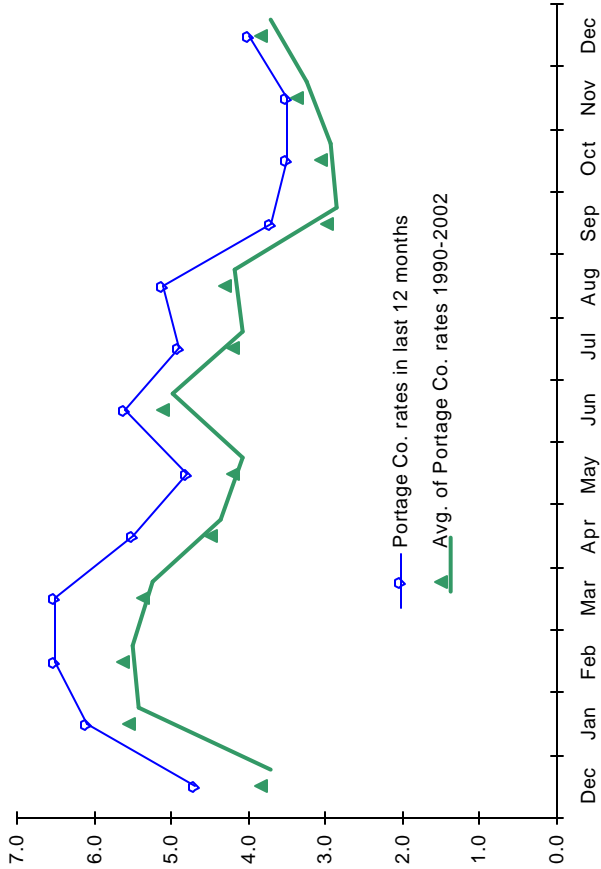
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